

INNOVATION OF THE MONTH



Product Report

Back-A-Line Back Support Belt

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We've recommended kidney belts before as a good idea for improving endurance when riding long distances. The small but constant impacts that get through the suspension, and the

less-than-ideal posture that many bikes force you to adopt, can all put a strain on the kidneys and lower back over time.

As our Physical Motorcycling expert Dr. Paul Kuhn has pointed out, proper posture is most important to comfort. *Lumbar lordosis*, or the natural reverse curvature of the lower spine when standing, is what we should also preserve when riding.

The **Back-A-Line** is designed to create that posture all the time. More than a simple support belt, its back portion is actually a stiff shaped pad about 1" thick that keys into the shape of your lower back. Relieved in the center to provide a comfortable groove for your

spinal column, it fits very naturally and is not uncomfortable to wear, whether walking or sitting. Worn under your waistband, it doesn't make your pants any tighter than an elastic belt.

It's retained by a pair of overlapping 4" velcro wraps on the front, which are backed up by a second 2" velcro belt that passes through a nylon ring and locks back against itself, again with velcro. Unlike most kidney belts, neither strap is elastic, which the manufacturer contends actually create muscle weakness. The rigid design, on the other hand, is said to create beneficial intra-abdominal pressure and isometric resistance. The construction quality is very high and the belt is claimed to last three times as long as stretchy types, which, as we know, eventually lose their elasticity. Although originally designed to reduce workplace back injuries, we found the device provided excellent long-ride comfort (tested for 1800 miles over four days). It works like a back-rest that you can **wear all day**. And, at \$39.95, it's reasonably priced.

— Dave Searle

To order, call: Cycle Gadgets—www.cyclegadgets.com; (877) 7GADGET; or for additional product information: www.backaline.com

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